

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1 through 10 are currently pending in the above-identified application. Claims 3 through 7 have been previously withdrawn from consideration without prejudice or disclaimer. Please amend Claims 1 and 2, and please add new Claims 8 through 10, as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A tag management server for providing tag management information corresponding to tag information read from an ID tag in response to an inquiry using said tag information, said ID tag including an ID number for a specific article and an ID sort indicating an inquiry locator of said tag management server, comprising:
 - a database for storing tag management information corresponding to respective ID tags, [[;]] wherein:
 - said tag management server accepts said tag information transmitted in accordance with said ID sort of said ID tag, judges whether said inquiry is legitimate or not, based on tag information corresponding to an ID tag managed by said tag management server;
 - said tag management server extracts an ID number from said tag information, said tag management server retrieves said tag management information corresponding to said ID number with use of tag information used in said legitimate inquiry from said database, [[;]] and wherein
 - when said ~~corresponding~~ tag management information is retrieved as corresponding tag management information, said tag management server supplies said tag management information to said ~~[[an]]~~ inquirer, and ~~when said inquiry is not legitimate or when corresponding tag management information is not retrieved, said tag management server gives a notice of the fact to said inquirer~~
 - when said tag management information is not retrieved as corresponding tag management information, said tag management server determines that said accepted tag information is not normal tag information, and said tag management server provides a notice of such determination to said inquirer.

2. (Original) The A tag management server according to Claim 1, wherein:
said tag management information includes, for every managed ID tag, a maker and a trade name of an article provided with said ID tag.
3. (Withdrawn) An information acquiring/utilizing system comprising:
 - a portable terminal for reading tag information from an ID tag provided in an article via radio waves;
 - a tag management server; and
 - an item management server; wherein:
 - said portable terminal makes an inquiry to said tag management server on the basis of tag information read from said ID tag, while said tag management server supplies corresponding tag management information to said portable terminal in response to said inquiry from said portable terminal; and
 - said portable terminal makes an inquiry to said item management server on the basis of said tag management information acquired from said tag management server, while said item management server supplies said portable terminal, in response to said inquiry from said portable terminal, with item information about an article provided with said ID tag from which said portable terminal acquires said tag information.
4. (Withdrawn) An information acquiring/utilizing system according to Claim 3, wherein:
 - said portable terminal includes an antenna having directivity for reading tag information from said ID tag.
5. (Withdrawn) An information acquiring/utilizing system according to Claim 3, wherein:
 - said portable terminal includes a non-directional antenna for reading tag information from said ID tag.
6. (Withdrawn) An information acquiring/utilizing system according to Claim 5, wherein:
 - said portable terminal includes an operating button for reading tag information from said ID tag, and when said operating button is operated, said portable terminal

reads tag information of said ID tag existing within a predetermined distance for a predetermined time.

7. (Withdrawn) An information acquiring/utilizing system according to Claim 5, wherein:

said portable terminal includes an operating button for reading tag information from said ID tag, and said portable terminal reads tag information of said ID tag existing within a predetermined distance during a period when said operating button is in an operating state.

8. (New) The tag management server according to Claim 1, wherein said ID number stored in said ID tag is a specific number corresponding to a specific article which ID number is not duplicated for any other article.

9. (New) The tag management sever according to Claim 1, wherein: said tag management server determines whether said tag information is of a signal format adapted for said inquiry for said tag management server, after accepting said tag information; and when said tag information is adapted for said signal format, said tag management server extracts an ID number from said tag information; and when said tag information is not adapted for said signal format, said tag management server notifies said inquirer of a determination that said tag information is not adapted for said signal format.

10. (New) The tag management sever according to Claim 1, wherein: said tag management server accepts a request for item information for said article from said inquirer which has supplied said tag information; and said tag management server makes an inquiry for said item information of said article to an item management server in accordance with maker-database-URL information as an inquirer of said item management server indicated by said tag management information.